



Minute, Friday 11 September 2009 9.40 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Co-operatives WA, Suite 1, Peer House, 2 Canning Highway, South Perth WA 6151

PRESENT: Co-operative Federation of New South Wales (Helen McCall), Co-operative Federation of South Australia (David Osgood and Trevor Schmidt), Co-operatives Victoria (David Griffiths), and Co-operatives WA (Chris Enright and Peter Wells) plus by invitation Trent Bartlett (Deputy Chairman, Co-operatives WA and CEO, Capricorn Society).

APOLOGIES: Jim Howard (Co-operative Federation of Queensland), Jim Sneesby (Co-operative Federation of New South Wales), Tony O'Shea (Co-operatives Victoria and CA Chairman) and Ramsey Margolis (NZ Cooperatives Association).

In the absence of Tony O'Shea, it was agreed that Chris Enright would chair the meeting.

1. Meeting Notes

Agreed: That the minutes of CA meeting of 5 May 2009 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

ACTION: Secretary

2. Co-operatives and Social Enterprise

There was discussion on co-operatives and social enterprise.

Trent reported that he would be speaking at the Social Enterprise World Forum taking place in Melbourne on 6 – 8 October 2009. He advised that Capricorn was supporting the establishment of an organisation called Social Business Australia.

It was agreed:

- (a) discuss further with Social Business Australia when established the possibility of a mutual relationship e.g. a newsletter, generic CA support, published articles etc,
- (b) on behalf of CA, CFNSW to initiate contact with ABACUS Mutual for future discussions on working together to promote mutuality principles;
- (c) Co-operatives Victoria would continue its involvement with Social Traders with Tony O'Shea to report to CA as and when appropriate;
- (d) to identify relevant Federal Government social enterprise initiatives and work for the inclusion of the co-operative option in those programmes; and
- (e) individual Federations to initiate their own participation in the Finding Australia's Social Enterprise Sector (FASES) survey <http://www.socialeconomy.net.au/tellus/index.jsp> with the view expressed that most co-operatives had some degree of social enterprise in their make-up.

ACTION: Various

3 Business arising from previous meeting

3.1 Legislation Update

It was noted that no Federation was able to report any known progress on the Co-operatives National Law Bill.

ACTION: All

It was noted, however, that the WA Co-operatives Bill 2009 had passed the Upper House on 10 September with several technical amendments and was to be returned to the Lower House for final approval and Royal Assent with proclamation possibly in April 2010 once all regulations had been settled.

ACTION: Co-operatives WA

3.2, Letter to the Prime Minister

It was noted that the Prime Minister's Office had replied to the CA letter of 6 April 2009 advising that the letter had been directed to the Treasurer for a response.

ACTION: Tony O'Shea

3.3, Letter to the Treasurer

It was noted that there had been no response to the letter of 6 July 2009 to the Treasurer, the Hon. Wayne Swan, MP, on recognition by the government, legislative draftsman and policy advisers of co-operatives as a legitimate legal structure and request for review of discriminatory legislation and policy.

ACTION: Tony O'Shea

3.4, Letter to Innovation Australia

It was noted that there had been no response to the letter of 6 June 2009 to David Miles, Chairman, Innovation Australia.

It was also noted, however, that the Master Butchers Co-operative Ltd (MBL) in South Australia had been informed it was now eligible for the Re-tooling for Climate Change program following an amendment to the programme guidelines to include co-operatives.

Agreed: CA needed politely press Innovation Australia for a reply to the 6 June letter as it was important that CA was in a position to demonstrate its participation in representative matters.

ACTION: Tony O'Shea

3.5, Co-operatives Europe

The Secretary reported that Co-operatives Europe had been requested to provide co-operative education materials and that no information had been received.

ACTION: David Griffiths

3.6, ICA Membership

The Secretary reported that the letter to the ICA had not yet been prepared.

It was agreed that Federations would provide the Secretary with estimates of total membership so that this could be included in a letter to the ICA.

ACTION: David Griffiths and All

In the discussion that followed, it was agreed to seek funding from the Australian Government to support CA membership of the ICA over a three year period for a total of \$150,000 covering membership fees and the ancillary costs of membership and sector communications. Enquiries to be made into availability of grant funding from established Innovation Australia or Education and Training type schemes failing which a request should be submitted to the appropriate Department/Minister.

ACTION: Tony O'Shea

3.7, Co-operative Education Statement

It was agreed to endorse the Co-operative Education position statement which when formatted would be published on the CA web site.

ACTION: David Griffiths

3.8, Demutualisation Paper

It was noted that no further work had been undertaken.

ACTION: David Griffiths and Helen McCall

3.9, Top 100

It was agreed to revise the list for a second release in March or April 2010 and the deadline for the collection of revised information would be in the December 2009/February 2010 period.

It was also agreed that in addition to turnover information would be sought on the number of members and employees.

It was agreed that Peter Wells would draft a letter of request that each Federation could use to collect data from co-operatives in their State.

ACTION: All

3.10, australia.coop

It was agreed in the future that Co-operatives Australia would be responsible for australia.coop and the shared cost of this was approved:

\$120-400 payable to Co-operatives Victoria for the site transfers on presentation of detailed costing.

\$288 for three years domain registration of australia.coop and \$73.50 annual web hosting fee to be shared between all Federations. CFV to raise invoices in due course.

ACTION: David Griffiths and All

3.11, Productivity Commission Inquiry – Not-for-Profit Sector

The CFNSW reported that it had been unable to identify a co-operative to assist in the preparation of an overarching CA submission to the Inquiry and as such that matter lapsed.

ACTION: No action

3.12, University of Sydney Enquiry

CFNSW reported on a meeting with the Business and Labour History Group, the Faculty of Economics and Business, the University of Sydney.

It was agreed that Helen McCall would continue to represent Co-operatives Australia in these ongoing discussions.

ACTION: Helen McCall

3.13, Cost Sharing

It was noted CFQ was to prepare a cost sharing formula for consideration and as such the matter was to be carried forward to the next meeting.

ACTION: CFQ

Fare equalisation as agreed with airfares to be pooled and divided by 6 attendees. Co-operatives WA to make arrangements for the respective settlements.

4, Other Business

4.1, Reports from Federations.

Co-operatives WA report was covered in 3.1 Legislation Update.

CFNSW reported on their co-operative conference for February 2010; a co-operative housing initiative; and their membership of 80 with the loss of some members and others suspending their membership.

Co-operatives Victoria reported on two new members and relationships with the Registrar of Co-operatives.

CFSA reported on a lift in subscription rates, their conference on 16 October 2009 and agreement to adopt the trading name Co-operatives South Australia.

4.2, Co-operative Housing Societies

This was noted:

ACTION: None

4.3, Co-operative Governance Practices

Co-operatives Victoria proposed the development of a co-operative governance practices survey which would generate a benchmark report that could be sold to co-operatives and a draft survey was tabled.

It was agreed that Co-operatives WA would pilot a governance practices survey with co-operatives in WA as part of the transition and education process in 2010 following passage of the Co-operatives Bill. Co-operatives would not be charged for the pilot survey which could provide an introduction for Federations to market professional services to assist in addressing any obvious gaps in governance.

ACTION: Co-operatives WA

4.4, Climate Change and Co-operatives

CFNSW advised that Cooperatives Europe had announced the formation of ACT – Addressing the Climate Threat. Matter viewed as an issue for each Federation to decide what action, if any, was appropriate in their jurisdiction.

ACTION: All

4.5, International Year of Co-operatives

It was agreed to lobby the Australian government to support the ICA call for a United Nations International Year of Co-operatives.

This decision followed the recommended consideration of the issue by two ICA members, Capricorn and NZCA.

It was agreed that there was particular value in promoting 2012, an Olympic Year, as the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives as that would give added focus to “co-operative values” and additional time for the UN to engage with the international sector when organizing “the Year”.

It was agreed to contact the NZCA and the CCA in Canada about contacting the UN caucus group CANZ - the grouping of Canada, Australia and New Zealand at the United Nations.

ACTION: David Griffiths and Tony O'Shea

5, Next Meeting and Hosting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be a teleconference in March 2010 at the latest and funded by CFNSW.

It was also agreed that the next face-to-face meeting would be in October 2010 in S.A to coincide with the Co-operatives South Australia annual conference at which David Osgood would be retiring.

David Griffiths
Secretary
14 September 2009